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ABSTRACT

This monograph proposes that sex equity should be infused and integrated into all aspects of the vocational curriculum until equity is accepted as an integral component of the educational process. It suggests that the leadership will come from vocational supervisors, vocational teachers, the Board of Education, state department staff, and officers and members of professional organizations. These recommendations are made for encouraging infusion: leaders who serve as role models, educators who set an example, support and rewards, inservice education, and monitoring. A checklist is provided for evaluating sex equity curriculum infusion. A discussion of the importance of infusion is followed by a list of examples of teaching and learning strategies that can be used to introduce and integrate equity into the curriculum. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the sex equity infusion is suggested as the final step in the infusion process. A selected bibliography is provided. (YLB)

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MONOGRAPH

INFUSING SEX EQUITY INTO THE CURRICULUM

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The Ohio State University
College of Education
Instructional Materials Laboratory

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MONOGRAPH

INFUSING SEX EQUITY INTO THE CURRICULUM

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INTRODUCTION

Sex equity should be infused and integrated into all aspects of the vocational curriculum until equity is accepted as an integral component of the educational process. Until that happens, the need will continue for specific plans to address equity issues and concerns related to every phase of the curriculum. A comprehensive plan for curriculum infusion includes preservice and in-service programs, nonsexist language in reports, and nontraditional speakers in the classroom.

Vocational educators have a legal, moral, and ethical responsibility to serve all students. Each student should have the opportunity to maximize his or her potential without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, handicap, or age.

WHAT IS CURRICULUM INFUSION AND INTEGRATION?

To *infuse* is *to introduce, to inspire, to extract, to act,* or *to take action. Integrate* is *to incorporate into the whole, to combine, to connect,* or *to make available to all.* Curriculum infusion and integration involve including and incorporating something into the curriculum so that it becomes a part of the whole and is applicable to everyone.

For sex equity to be infused effectively into the curriculum, it must become an integrated part of the whole. It is **not** just a topic for a program or a separate unit in a class. It is **not** just the inclusion of a nontraditional speaker on career day or the responsibility of a few teachers. Infusion requires that sex equity, along with other equity issues, becomes an integral component of vocational education programming. Curriculum infusion is demonstrated by the behavior of teachers, students, and administrators. Lesson plans, visual aids, exhibits, textbooks, instructional materials, and student activities must reflect an awareness and an understanding of, and a commitment to, educational equity.

WHO PROVIDES THE LEADERSHIP?

The leadership needed to infuse sex equity into the curriculum will come from a variety of sources. The vocational school superintendent and director must demonstrate an acceptance of and a commitment to the importance of the need for the process. Successful implementation demands support from the Board of Education and adequate allocation of resources.

Vocational supervisors who are in a key position to provide assistance with curriculum review and revision, may provide in-service education, collect relevant data, assist with lesson plans, and help teachers select instructional materials. Teacher educators can serve as resources to vocational schools for in-service programs and curriculum development activities. Teacher educators also need to infuse and integrate sex equity into the curriculum of their preservice programs.

Vocational teachers can provide key leadership for

their colleagues. Teachers who are doing an effective job of addressing and integrating equity issues into their own curriculum are excellent resource people. Leadership can also be expected from state department staff and from officers and members of professional organizations.

HOW CAN INFUSION BE ENCOURAGED?

One key to leadership is to serve as a **role model.** It is important for vocational educators to demonstrate their commitment to the concept of equity in the curriculum by speaking out in support of the concept and doing what they expect others to do. Taking an active role in bringing about change may mean *rocking the boat.*

Setting an **example** is one way to help others accept an idea. Vocational educators should address equity issues and concerns in carrying out their job duties and tasks. Memos, reports, visual aids, committee assignments, and meetings should be nonsexist and free of bias and stereotyping. Jobs, tasks, leaves, awards, and promotions should be based on performance and competence. Hiring new staff should include an assertive effort to recruit qualified women and minorities.

Support and rewards will speed the process of infusion. Curriculum changes may require new materials and up-to-date texts. Funds should be available for attending meetings, taking classes, or visiting model programs. Teachers and staff members who *buy into* the concept deserve to be recognized and rewarded. A support system may be needed during the transition, especially if some of the staff members are against the changes. Students who elect nontraditional programs may also need some type of support system or counseling.

In-service education can be crucial in bringing about change. However, it is important that teachers and staff be involved in planning what will best meet their needs. Sex equity can be controversial and a *turnoff*, so any type of programming needs careful planning. Teachers want ideas and information they can use in their own classrooms and laboratories. They may resent or resist a speaker who lectures to them about what they should do.

There is a need to **monitor** what actually does occur. Infusion is more than putting sex equity into the curriculum on paper. It requires that change be monitored and that progress be continually reviewed. Sex equity is both content and process. As with any other part of the curriculum, the sex equity component will need to be evaluated and revised. Remember the 3-D model—Discuss, Demonstrate, and Do! Then, start over again whenever needed.

CHECKLIST FOR SEX EQUITY CURRICULUM INFUSION

- Is the curriculum content relevant and meaningful for all students? This is especially important if students are to be attracted to nontraditional classes.
- Are there nontraditional role models for both females and males?
- Do advisory committees include a balanced representation of males, females, and minorities?
- Are students encouraged to develop to their potential regardless of sex, race, and traditional roles?
- Does student interaction with counselors, administrators, and teachers include the same treatment, expectations, participation, goals, activities, and job placement for males, females, and minorities?
- Does the overall school environment promote sex-fairness and equal opportunities?
- Is sex-fair language evident in all written materials, including memos, reports, tests, study guides, programs, and public relations materials?
- Are students grouped in ways other than by sex?
- Are subtle forms of discrimination monitored and discouraged?
- Are students encouraged to take advantage of nontraditional opportunities?
- Do parents, students, and teachers receive information about new programs and nontraditional offerings?
- Are students who enroll in nontraditional classes or programs treated fairly and respectfully by teachers, peers, and employers?
- Are student dropouts and course changes monitored to determine if discrimination or bias contributed to the cause?
- Do in-service programs and teacher evaluations help teachers change any sexist behavior, language, and attitudes they may exhibit?
- Does the school board support the need to go beyond written policies and actively promote equity in the curriculum?

— Are instructional materials and textbooks selected not only to be free from bias, but to promote educational equity?

— Is equity awareness and curriculum infusion being promoted in the community?

— Is mentoring and networking a part of the curriculum design?

— Are students encouraged to make academic and career decisions based on individual abilities and interests rather than on gender?

— Are accurate data on salaries, benefits, and promotions used in curriculum planning?

— Do course-of-study materials and lesson plans reflect sex-fairness and nontraditional roles?

— Does the curriculum reflect modern lifestyles and the changing roles of women and men?

— Does the curriculum provide opportunities for both males and females to participate in leadership roles, skill events, and athletic activities?

— Are all vocational youth organizations treated in a fair and equitable manner?

— Does the administration take steps to monitor and correct situations involving bias or discrimination?

— Are employers and key people in the workplace encouraged to support equity activities?

— Are women, men, and minorities equally represented at special occasions such as career days, graduation, open house, vocational education week, in-service programs, recruitment days, ground breakings, political meetings, and awards ceremonies?

— Are all services and activities equally available to all students?

— Are school facilities and equipment equal in access and quality for all students?

— Do teachers take advantage of every opportunity to promote equity in the classroom?

— Do vocational youth organizations emphasize equity as one of their goals?

— Do teachers continue to develop and utilize new strategies for integrating equity into the classroom?

— Do students have opportunities to discuss possible discrimination on the job, alternative solutions to discrimination in the world of work, and strategies for bringing about change?

WHY IS INFUSION IMPORTANT?

A central goal of democracy is the optimal development of all individuals in society. Our society has not yet reached this ideal goal. There is still discrimination against individuals because of race, creed, sex, age, or socioeconomic class. Schools are expected to play a major role in preparing citizens for our democratic society. Schools must not perpetuate the discriminatory patterns that exist in society, but must conscientiously plan a curriculum that will promote equity and equal opportunity for all. *Fair and Balanced Treatment of Minorities and Women* (1976) reports the following:

> Although progress has been made in recent years, instructional materials...have mirrored a culture which has, in the main, reserved for white males its positions and leadership and centrality and has cast minorities and females in secondary roles; and few people have recognized until recently the similarities that exist between sex discrimination and that are suffered by minority groups. As a result of the differentiated roles, the culture has tended to assume that white males possess in larger measure the traits and characteristics that qualify them for primary roles as the aquirers of property, the producers of goods and services, and the problem solvers and decision makers in business, industry, government, education, and other facets of the society.
>
> In mirroring the culture, instructional materials in narrative and illustrations have contributed to the perpetuation of indefensible stereotypes. That is, in instructional materials white males have been the active, skillful, intelligent performers of important jobs and the makers of history; and if represented at all, those who passively watch from the sidelines with an occasional helping hand and limited participation in intellectual and economic areas most valued by the society are females and minorities. Being portrayed in a limited way or not at all in narrative and illustrations is an implied second-class citizen stereotyping which is perhaps more damaging to the female and the minority than is overt stereotyping. As a result of overt and implied stereotyping, many females and minorities do not aspire to be what they are capable of being, or they suppress aspirations because subtle psychological pressures make them feel that such aspirations are not *acceptable* in the society. Being stereotyped as strong, capable, and less sensitive and emo-

> tional also places constraints upon males which (a) prevent some from pursuing certain career paths such as artistic careers, (b) cause others to carry unnecessary burdens in efforts to fulfill the male stereotype, and (c) lead some who cannot achieve the male stereotype to regard themselves as failures. Thus, stereotyping limits the optimal fulfillment in line with aspirations and capabilities of many women, minorities, and men; and society and the individuals so limited are the losers as the result of the inappropriate utilization of talent (pp. 2-4).

The authors of *Fair and Balanced Treatment of Minorities and Women* reinforce the idea that the school is the most pervasive influence in the shaping of an individual's perceptions of self and others in society. Therefore, curriculum materials must not continue to mirror stereotyped roles, but must be designed to achieve the optimal development of all individuals regardless of race, creed, sex, age, or socioeconomic class.

The very nature of vocational education produces an even greater challenge. Students must be prepared to deal with actual discrimination or stereotyping on the job. How can students learn to handle themselves in situations that are not equitable? Students need to learn skills and techniques that will help them recognize bias, discrimination, and stereotyping on the job. They also need to be aware of alternative ways to resolve problems and change unfair practices. Some of the traditions of the working world may be difficult to change, but a starting place is the vocational curriculum. Tomorrow's employers and managers are students today.

As stated in *Fair and Balanced Treatment of Minorities and Women*, it should be recognized that fair and balanced treatment of both sexes and all races in subject matter content involves

> ...achieving balance in the roles in which minorities, women, and men are portrayed in narrative, examples, and illustrations, and dealing frankly with past and present discriminations against minorities and women (p. 17).

To achieve this balanced treatment, the authors suggest the following guidelines:

a. Represent individuals of both sexes and all races as whole human beings with human strengths and weaknesses.
b. Represent individuals of both sexes and all races as possessing the full range of human interests, capabilities, and ambitions.
c. Consciously and carefully evaluate whether narrative and illustrations achieve balanced roles for both sexes and all races.
d. Achieve balanced representation when fictitious people are used in narrative and examples.
e. Achieve balanced representation in illustrations.
f. Achieve balanced representation in sound recordings (pp. 18-22).

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

There are many teaching and learning strategies that can be used to introduce and integrate equity into the curriculum. Teaching methods and materials should be selected to accomplish the objectives of the program and may need to be modified for specific content areas or to meet the needs and interests of students. The ideas listed below are examples of some equity activities that can be used by vocational teachers.

— Analyze pictures of women and men on the job. Students can bring in pictures from newspapers and magazines for a poster, collage, or bulletin board. The pictures should represent a balance of men and women and minorities. Students can analyze the people in the pictures in relation to roles, actions, leadership, dress, position, tasks, and setting.

— Analyze pictures or articles about men and women in roles other than work. These could include community activities, service groups, professional activities, sports or leisure activities, and family roles.

— Develop criteria to evaluate the representation of women, men, and minorities in television and movies. Use these criteria to evaluate specific programs or segments of movies or videos. Students can look for bias or discrimination in relation to sex, race, age, or handicap.

— Write letters of commendation to companies that represent both sexes and all races in a balanced and equitable manner. Students can also write to companies to express concerns about programs or ads that promote bias and discrimination.

— Study the laws and legislation that relate to equal rights. Students can analyze court cases and have mock trials or attend a real court case involving discrimination.

— Analyze the written materials related to a certain job or occupation. These could include manuals, application forms, position announcements, and job descriptions. Students should look for both subtle and overt forms of discrimination and bias.

— Rewrite materials that include some type of bias or discrimination. Check content, language, and illustrations.

— Collect cartoons and comic strips that deal with male and female roles and activities. Rate the cartoons and comics with a plus or a minus and make a display for the classroom or lab.

— Conduct a research project with students collecting information from interviews, questionnaires, or observations on some topic related to stereotyping and discrimination. Students can tabulate, analyze, and report the results to students and administrators.

— Evaluate the school environment to make sure there is a balanced representation of both sexes and of minorities on the staff and in brochures, textbooks, bulletin boards, news releases, and other areas of the school.

— Review classroom materials, such as tests, study guides, handouts, and assignment sheets, for any type of bias, discrimination, or stereotyping. Word problems in math should include examples of both sexes in nontraditional activities, such as *Mary loaded 14 boxes on the truck in 10 minutes* or *John cut the cake into 10 pieces to sell for 50 cents each at the bake sale*. Stories in English should be representative, and illustrations should show women as well as men in active roles. A variety of physical characteristics should be evident to represent women, men, and minorities. There should be tall people, short people, people who are thin, heavy, attractive, unattractive, mature, young, and old, and people with different features.

— Encourage students to go beyond the textbook to identify women and minority individuals who served as leaders or made contributions to history, politics, art, music, or business.

— Discuss the realities of past and present discrimination as a part of the curriculum. This can be done in relation to specific careers and jobs or in a general discussion about employment practices and policies.

— Discuss ways students can cope with discrimination or stereotyping on the job.

— Provide nontraditional role models as a major focus in the curriculum. Invite people in nontraditional jobs or roles to class. Take students on field trips to see nontraditional role models on the job. Collect pictures, movie clips, videotapes, advertisements, and newspapers to use in the classroom.

— Analyze tapes, records, and songs for examples of bias and stereotyping.

— Read biographies of famous men and women and pick out examples of nontraditional activities and/or cases of discrimination.

— Read some of the classics in literature as well as current fiction for examples of bias and stereotyping or of balanced representation of women, men, and minorities. Identify strong characters, including females, males, and minorities, and discuss their roles and behavior.

— Plan language projects to analyze vocabulary and compare sexist versus nonsexist language, titles, and terminology.

— Participate in role plays, skits, or simulations related to subject matter content or to on-the-job situations. Change roles to be the male, then the female, then the minority or the handicapped person. Discuss feelings and attitudes related to the different roles.

— Develop case studies and *what would you do if?* scenarios related to equity situations at school, in the community, and on the job. Discuss alternative ways to deal with each situation.

— Produce a student newspaper or newsletter that features equity in vocational education. Make sure the publication meets all guidelines for sex-fairness and balanced representation.

— Organize a panel of experts to present information on equity issues or to debate topics related to bias and discrimination in the workplace.

— Encourage the media center director or librarian to feature equity materials and new resources that present people in nontraditional roles.

— Solicit ideas from advisory committees. Ask for suggestions on how to promote equal opportunities for all.

— Use current facts and figures to back up classroom discussions and curriculum projects.

— Be a role model.

THE TEST

The final test to determine the effectiveness of sex equity infusion into the curriculum is based on several questions. Has change occurred? Is there evidence of a fair representation of men, women, and minorities in all aspects of the curriculum? Do

vocational educators utilize every opportunity to integrate equity information and equal opportunities into the learning environment? Are bias, discrimination, and stereotyping discouraged and corrected in a professional manner? Is there evidence that everyone, regardless of race, sex, creed, age, and disability, has the opportunity to develop to her or his highest potential? An **A** goes to those programs in which vocational educators have demonstrated their commitment to sex equity in the curriculum through **awareness, acceptance,** and **action**!

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